CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic display system operative to facilitate interactive graphical interface animation by a user, comprising:

a central processing unit, coupled to a system bus;

a memory unit coupled to the system bus and having loaded therein an operating system, application programs and computer-executable instructions for:

inserting a desired image onto a first window;

inserting anchors onto a second window by, for each anchor, selecting a desired pose from a plurality of predetermined poses; and

upon a cursor being dragged over the second window to a desired anchor, additively applying characteristics for the desired anchor to the desired image based on a proximity of the cursor to the desired dot anchor;

a display unit coupled to the system bus;

a cursor control unit arranged to provide signals to control movement of a cursor on the display unit; and

the system bus, for linking the central processing unit, the display unit, the memory unit, and the cursor control unit.

2. The electronic display system of claim 1 wherein the characteristics for the anchors are at least one of:

facial expressions;

poses; and

camera positions.

3. The electronic display system of claim 1 wherein the electronic display system is a computer display system.

4. The electronic display system of claim 1 wherein inserting anchors further includes combining a plurality of desired anchors to form a compound anchor.

5. The electronic display system of claim 1 wherein a palette in a third window shown on the display unit is used for selecting a desired image to be inserted onto the first window.

6. A method for facilitating interactive, expressive animation on an electronic display system by a user, comprising the steps of:

inserting a desired image onto a first window;

inserting anchors onto a second window by, for each anchor, selecting a desired pose from a plurality of preselected poses; and

dragging a cursor over the second window to a desired anchor wherein characteristics for the desired anchor are additively applied to the desired image based on a proximity of the cursor to the desired anchor.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the characteristics for the anchors are at least one of:

facial expressions;

poses; and

camera positions.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein the electronic display system is a computer display system.

9. The method of claim 6 wherein inserting anchors further includes combining a plurality of desired anchors to form a compound anchor.

10. The method of claim 6 wherein a palette in a third window displayed on the display unit is used for selecting a desired image to be inserted onto the first window.

11. A computer-readable medium having computer-readable instructions for providing a graphical user interface for interactive animation, wherein the computer-executable instructions include:

inserting a desired image onto a first window;

inserting anchors onto a second window by, for each anchor, selecting a desired pose from a plurality of predetermined poses; and

upon a cursor being dragged over the second window to a desired anchor, additively applying characteristics for the desired anchor to the desired image based on a proximity of the cursor to the desired anchor.

12. The computer-readable medium of claim 11 wherein the characteristics for the dot targets/anchors/node terms are at least one of:

facial expressions;

poses; and

camera positions.

13. The computer-readable medium of claim 11 wherein inserting anchors further includes combining a plurality of desired anchors to form a compound anchor.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 11 wherein a palette in a third window is utilized for selecting a desired image to be inserted onto the first window.

15. A method for facilitating animation using a graphics-based graphical user interface, comprising the steps of:

dragging a pointer over an arrangement of a plurality of anchors in a controller window wherein each anchor represents a displacement of a state of a graphics-based object from a base state; and

redrawing/updating the base state of the object in a display window in accordance with the proximity of the pointer to the anchors as the pointer is dragged over the controller window.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein positions of the plurality of anchors in the controller window are set by the user.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the user uses the pointer to position the plurality of anchors.

18. The method of claim 15 wherein each target has a predetermined area of influence that is used to determine, based on a position of the pointer, the displacement to be applied to the graphics-based object.

19. The method of claim 15 wherein the state of the object is redrawn/updated by putting the graphics-based object into a default base state when a position of the pointer changes, then applying anchors to the object based on a weighting

of each anchor, wherein the weighting is calculated based on the displacement of the pointer from the anchor.

20. The method of claim 15 wherein each redrawing/updating of the base state of the graphics-based object is recorded to provide an animation path.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the animation path is editable.

22. The method of claim 15 wherein multiple anchors with individual weightings are applied simultaneously.

23. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for facilitating animation using a graphics-based graphical user interface, wherein the computer-executable instructions include:

dragging a pointer over an arrangement of a plurality of anchors in a controller window wherein each anchor represents a displacement of a state of a graphics-based object from a base state; and

redrawing/updating the base state of the object in a display window in accordance with the proximity of the pointer to the anchors as the pointer is dragged over the controller window.

24. The computer-readable medium of claim 23 wherein positions of the plurality of anchors in the controller window are set by the user.

25. The computer-readable medium of claim 24 wherein the user uses the pointer to position the plurality of anchors.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 23 wherein each anchor has a predetermined area of influence that is used to determine, based on a position of the pointer, the displacement to be applied to the graphics-based object.

27. The computer-readable medium of claim 23 wherein the state of the graphics-based object is redrawn/updated by putting an object into a default base state when a position of the pointer changes, then applying anchors to the graphics-based object based on a weighting of each anchor, wherein the weighting is calculated based on the displacement of the pointer from the anchor.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 23 wherein each redrawing/updating of the base state of the graphics-based object is recorded to provide an animation path.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 28 wherein the animation path is editable.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 23 wherein multiple anchors with individual weightings are applied simultaneously.